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ABSTRACT

This handbook is designed to assist teachers at the elementary and secondary level in the development of curricula on aging which can integrate the concepts of aging into ongoing lesson plans. The five content areas of instruction include chronological aging, physiological and biological aging, sociocultural aspects of aging, psychological aging, and the community and its relationship to older adults. Each content area is defined and contains the following elements: (1) a statement of content area goals; (2) specific concepts within each area; and (3) instructional objectives for the elementary and secondary grade levels. (Author/HLM)

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ED169442

Handbook for Instruction on Aging

in California Public Schools

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve

CG 013387

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CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION Wilson Riles–Superintendent of Public Instruction Sacramento, 1978

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Foreword

We marvel at the art of an ancient temple. We sit in wonder under ageless redwoods. We search the junk of another era for priceless antiques. We turn the pages of books of a century ago with tender care. But we seldom speak of the beauty of old people. I believe that learning to appreciate that beauty is essential to the advancement of a civilized people. Learning that the lines of age are the steady imprint of our evolving character is to understand the meaning of life itself.

I believe the way we in education regard the older members in our communities—the way we treat the aged—can set the tone and a pattern for all of society. We are watched carefully by children who grow up to understand the meaning of acceptance or rejection. If, for example, we lead children to believe that to grow old means to be dumped on some waste heap of society, then they will view old age as something to be avoided as long as possible. We must tell them as Zoroaster told the ancient Persian peoples:

> Years wrinkle the skin, but giving up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul. Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear, and despair—these are the long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust. You are as young as your faith, and as old as your doubts; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fears; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.

This handbook, which is an outgrowth of a Department of Education project on aging, was designed to provide teachers and school administrators with a guide they can use in developing curriculum on aging as part of their daily classroom activities. I urge you who teach to do as the handbook suggests: Make an honest assessment of your understanding and acceptance of aging. I believe it is vitally important that we develop in our youth positive attitudes toward aging as a natural part of life, but that will not happen if we do not have positive attitudes and respect for the aging going on in our own lives. Jeanette Piccard, a pupil in the Mountain Elementary School in Soquel, California, developed the positive attitude of which I speak. As a result of taking part in the Department-sponsored pilot project on aging in her school, Jeanette expressed her view of aging in this way:

> There are many beautiful ways of aging: older people surrounded by friends, children, and grandchildren. Some of old age is loneliness, a loneliness that comes when the young equate aging with uselessness and death.
>
> People often forget the problems and difficulties of youth. They also try to ignore the problems of old age. *Old age, like youth, is a part of life.*

Yes, Jeanette Piccard, old age is a part of life, and the attitudes we develop toward age in our youth will determine in large measure the attitudes we develop toward life and work and the changes that make this life more rewarding—the work more meaningful.

You who teach children can help bridge the gap between generations. You can help establish lines of communication between youth and age. You can teach the children, using your own examples, that author Joshua Liebman was right when he wrote, "The human self is not a gift; it is an achievement." And you can cite additional examples to prove another of Mr. Liebman's statements: "The attainment of a self is a running battle, a continuing process, and a victory that is never fully consummated until the chambers of our heart flutter and fill for the last time."

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Preface

In 1971 the White House Conference on Aging made a large number of recommendations on aging and older persons. One recommendation stated that information on aging should be provided at all levels of schooling—from preschool age through adulthood. The curriculum on aging contained in this handbook represents an important effort to fulfill that recommendation.

This publication is a beginning attempt at curriculum development of concepts on aging for students in kindergarten through grade twelve. It is based on the present status of the aged in America. Statistics show a steady increase in the number of persons over age sixty-five and an increase in the proportion of older adults in the general population. The impact of this change in the demographic structure of American society, already considerable, will be felt even more in the years to come. Education on aging (1) relates to current and emerging social problems by raising social consciousness, leading to the growth of effective public and private policies; and (2) enhances personal awareness, helping students perceive aging as a normal process for which one can prepare.

Incorporating education on aging into the curriculum will encourage discussion of experiences and increase the likelihood that positives attitudes will emerge. The significance of the school as a primary social institution intricately involved in shaping a child's perception of self cannot be underestimated. Teachers should provide an environment in which a child can test and retest perceptions in the total context of personal development, and teachers should serve a vital role as both facilitators and monitors.

This handbook was prepared as part of a project to assist teachers in the development, at the elementary school and high school levels, of curricula on aging. The initial motivation for the project resulted from (1) a review of demographic studies showing the rapid increase in the numbers of the elderly, whose needs and concerns warrant attention; and (2) work with older adults and research that clearly demonstrated a need for cross-generational communication. The purpose of the project is to prepare teachers to integrate concepts of aging into ongoing lesson plans at the elementary and secondary levels—a logical way to reach large numbers of young people in a socially approved manner.

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Introduction to the Handbook

A remarkable change in population structure has occurred in the United States since 1900, challenging teachers to prepare children for longer and more vital adulthood and old age. Every day, approximately 5,000 persons turn sixty-five years of age, and about 3,600 persons aged sixty-five and older die; consequently, a net increase occurs of 1,400 "senior citizens" per day, or more than 400,000 persons each year. In 1900, 4 percent of the population of 76 million were sixty-five years of age or older. Today, 11 percent of the 215 million persons in the United States are over sixty-five years of age—about 23 million persons. Population studies predict that by the year 2020 there will be 40 million elderly persons, roughly 13 to 15 percent of the U.S. population.[1]

In a youth-oriented society in which great value is placed on youthful appearance and activities, an enormous educational effort is needed to foster value for human life at every age and stage of development. The prevailing negative images of life after some arbitrary number of years must be examined and evaluated in the light of facts so that new values can be placed upon the opportunities, challenges, advantages, and developmental tasks of each phase of the aging process, including old age.

The development of those attributes of adulthood that produce personal satisfaction, an informed citizenry, and continued fulfillment into old age should be fostered in children from the beginning of their schooling. Education on aging will:

- Contribute to more meaningful learning within existing curricula.
- Foster the development of a broader perspective from which to view aging.
- Create more positive attitudes toward the aging process.
- Increase self-confidence.
- Further the creation of values that respect the dignity of all persons.

Use of the Handbook

Because aging is not a single concept or process, it can be explored most satisfactorily in all aspects

[1] Leon F. Bouvier, Elinore Allee, and Frank McVeigh, "The Elderly in America," *Population Bulletin*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (1975).

of the curriculum. Education on aging is multidisciplinary and fits easily into recognized subject matter. The perspectives and concepts delineated in the handbook support this view. Education on aging is also multidimensional, including not only the chronology of the life span but the physiological and biological, sociological and cultural, and psychological changes occurring over a period of time as well as political, social, and environmental issues.

The handbook is suitable for use in conducting inservice programs and assisting teachers in adapting concepts of aging to present curricula in all disciplines and at all levels, from kindergarten through grade twelve. Teachers in preschool and adult programs are encouraged to use the handbook as a resource for introducing concepts appropriate to the curricula at those levels.

Students learn concepts of aging when the teacher is sensitive to the aging process and brings the concepts into every subject taught. The study of aging can also be structured as curricula encompassing total semesters or as short-term units of study developed to meet specific needs. The handbook can provide stimuli to develop leadership for those in a position to influence attitudes and values related to change now and in the future.

Recent Trends and Developments

According to H. Lee Jacobs, an authority in education on aging, this kind of education in the United States has been poorly conceived, fragmented, and uncoordinated. He attributes the deficiency largely to the failure of educators to accept the concept of life-cycle developmental psychology, which logically includes education on aging at all levels. Old age is to be considered only one of the variables of aging.[2]

In assessing recent trends, Jacobs comments:

> While a considerable number of individual school systems have, in recent years, introduced some emphasis on education for aging below the adult level, no generally recognized pattern for elementary and secondary school systems has yet emerged. The first major attempt in American education to change this situation is to be seen in the three-year pilot project, "Teacher Education Program on Aging," launched at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, in 1971.[3]

The first attempt at presenting the study of aging in a scientific and academically acceptable manner to high school youth was initiated in North Dakota in 1962. A unit of study on aging entitled *Youth Looks at Aging* was used and later published as a monograph by the University of Iowa.[4] The publication has since been used in many schools throughout the country.

In Winnetka, Illinois, a project for academic motivation was begun some years ago and was eventually included in schools in nine adjacent communities. The project consisted of a carefully formulated program of using the volunteer services of a large number of adults to motivate underachieving children and youth. In the process positive attitudes toward aging and older adulthood were developed. Similar projects have been used in many communities to achieve cross-generational communication and aid young people.

Another project with implications for education on aging is the "living English" teaching technique begun by a young English teacher in Rabun Gap, Georgia, in 1966. Ninth- and tenth-grade students who had shown much disinterest in traditional presentations of English literature were induced to publish a magazine. For material they went to older persons in the community, studying their backgrounds and cultures. The students began a dialogue that unified the community by developing understanding between generations and across cultures. The book produced by the students, *The Foxfire Book*,[5] became a best seller, and the method of teaching used has spread to other schools.

Numerous other ways to make schoolchildren aware of the process of aging can be cited. Units on aging have been incorporated into home economics courses, "teach-ins" conducted by adult volunteers have been used in sociology classes, and physical fitness programs in high schools have been extended to senior citizens and younger students. Many institutions across the nation are now engaged in developing materials for education on aging.[6] Many schools are also finding that older adults make excellent tutors or can serve in other positions as needed.

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[2] H. Lee Jacobs, "Education for Aging in the Elementary and Secondary School System," in *Learning for Aging*. Edited by Stanley Grabowski and W. Dean Mason. Washington, D.C.: Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1974, Chapter 5. The material in this section is drawn largely from Jacobs' article.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] H. Lee Jacobs, *Youth Looks at Aging* (Second edition). Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1969.

[5] *The Foxfire Book*. Edited by Eliot Wigginton. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., Anchor Books, 1972.

[6] The materials are ably reviewed in Adele R. Saxe, "Development of a Training Program to Introduce the Study of Old Age into the School Curriculum: K–12" (master's thesis, San Jose State University, 1976).

A Philosophy of Education on Aging

Today, children can, on the average, expect to live to be seventy-five years of age. During their lives they will prepare for adulthood, help support society during their working years, and continue to live out their own ideas on aging. Educators working in the field of gerontology are seeking ways in which to improve the image of aging so that people can accept old age as a normal, anticipated, and vital part of the life span. Realistic concepts of aging can facilitate the transition into retirement and can help to make retirement living satisfying.

As a result of technological advancements, the nature and structure of the family unit have changed. Many children do not have the opportunity to experience grandparent role models. The committee that formulated the handbook believes that:

- Young persons need a balanced view of aging, including positive images that will develop confidence in the aging processes to be experienced.
- As a means of passing on the culture from one generation to another, education can take some responsibility for providing role models and for offering accurate definitions of old persons from which students can begin to form some identity.
- Education on aging is a positive measure designed to help ensure the quality of life throughout one's life span.

The philosophy on which this handbook is based is that, given correct information, available resources, reasonable challenges, and an opportunity for creative instruction, teachers will develop a curriculum on aging as part of daily classroom activities. Instruction on aging should be concerned with the development of:

1. Life-cycle education, including all the major processes and occasions of life: childhood, courtship, marriage, career, leisure, grief, and death
2. Positive images of the elderly and the aging process
3. An understanding that society changes and that each cohort of older persons is unique
4. A realization that older persons are individuals seeking opportunities for individual

choices, active community participation, and love and respect

5. An appreciation for the accumulated wisdom and abilities of the elderly

The handbook gives teachers practical help by providing (1) suggestions to develop concepts on aging that enhance classroom instruction; and (2) materials that will provide necessary background information for building values and positive self-concepts.

Each person develops a personal philosophy according to experiences acquired through living and learning. It is hoped that this handbook will open new vistas, challenge perspectives, and provide some answers to questions often raised on the subject of aging.

Relationship of Content Area Goals to Learning

Teachers accepting the challenge that this handbook proposes must be willing to make an honest assessment of their understanding and acceptance of aging. Understanding gained through knowledge and experience influences the teaching process as to what is said and, more importantly, as to what is conveyed by one's attitude. Students perceive teachers' attitudes as part of the total classroom learning experience. Because attitude formation is largely unconscious, what is assimilated becomes especially important.

Any meaningful program of instruction requires that teachers conduct an inventory of the attitudes, needs, and interests of their students. The inventory will help teachers determine goals, methods, specific concepts, and appropriate areas of knowledge for instruction.

In assessing the relationship of the content area goals to learning, the teacher might begin by identifying the aspects of learning under each goal, such as:

1. Self-awareness—an understanding of one's intrinsic worth and one's relation to the world
   a. Concepts of self
   b. Concepts of society
   c. Concepts of health
   d. Concepts of aging as a continuous process
2. Decision making—an effective use of options
   a. Intellectual processes
   b. Problem solving
   c. Choosing from alternatives
   d. Relation to value systems
   e. Critical thinking processes
3. Coping action—dealing positively and effectively in managing life situations
   a. Social behavior of individuals and groups
   b. Attitudes and values that guide behavior, including experience in the valuing processes
   c. Work-study skills

Teachers involved in the initial demonstration project on developing curricula on aging were enthusiastic about expected benefits to students and their own increased knowledge about aging. Their questions reflected a growing interest in the goals and methods of such instruction. In evaluating and assessing student learning in classroom

activities, teachers asked questions such as the following:

- What research is available on the problems of the elderly?
- What can students and teachers do about the problems of the elderly?
- Why do many older people prefer living with others of the same age group?
- What is meant by *intergenerational relations?*
- Why do children have so few contacts with the elderly? Where can they get such contacts?
- Where do we find suitable audiovisual materials on the elderly?
- How can we encourage publishers and filmmakers to offer interesting materials on the process of aging?
- How can a school plan for inservice education on aging?
- When should we talk with the children about grief and death?
- How can we show aging positively?

This handbook supplies some of the answers to these questions. Other answers will be found as the teacher explores the resources and materials suggested.

Content Areas of Instruction on Aging

This handbook includes five content areas of instruction on aging:

- Chronological Aging
- Physiological/Biological Aging
- Sociocultural Aspects of Aging
- Psychological Aging
- The Community and the Older Individual

Each content area is defined in the handbook and contains the following elements:

- A statement of content area goals
- Selected concepts within each content area
- Suggested objectives recommended for elementary (kindergarten through grade six) or secondary (grades seven through twelve) students

Concepts of aging are listed within each content area. Content area goals under each area heading relate to a number of suggested objectives at the appropriate level of instruction.

Chronological Aging

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding of aging as a natural process of continual growing, learning, maturing, and dying in all species, including the human species. Develop an understanding that each species has its own life span.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Aging begins at conception and continues throughout life, leading to eventual death.	Recognize different rates of growth and development as one ages. Talk about changes in physical appearance as one ages. Compare oneself to other members of the family and to friends. Describe ways in which both children and adults appreciate the meaning and contributions of each stage of life in relation to the life span. Understand that needs and desires are different during various stages of life.	Discuss different attitudes toward chronological aging and the advantages and consequences of such attitudes. Identify the challenges and rewards of each stage of life: infancy, childhood, adolescence, youth, early adulthood, middle years, older years. Compare changes at each stage.
Intergenerational cycles will ensure the survival of the human species.	Become aware that each day people are born and die and that the young carry on from the old.	Describe the integenerational cycles and analyze how they ensure the survival of the human species.
Plants, animals, and humans all have different life spans.	Recognize that all living species come from like living species.	Recognize the differences and similarities of the needs of various organisms for survival.
Each species is known to be dependent on other species for survival.	Talk about food chains. Give examples of the contributions of plants and animals to the environment and to the balance of nature. List factors within each species that affect its life span. Understand that the tendency toward a particular life span is inherited. Discuss the gestation periods of various plants and animals. Compare those periods with the gestation period of a human fetus. Talk about one's experiences in growing plants and raising pets and compare their life spans. Identify the effect of the environment on one's potential life span.	Examine the interrelatedness of factors involved in maintaining a balance of nature for the survival of all species. Discuss the genetic basis of plants, animals, and humans as related to life span. Investigate differences in life spans within a species. Analyze ways in which environmental effects can be modified in various species.

Chronological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Understand that society must accommodate to the phenomenon of increasing longevity.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
An increasing number of people are living to be more than sixty-five years of age.	Become aware of the number of classmates having grandparents or great-grandparents still living. List reasons for people living longer today.	Investigate available research on medical advances that contribute to a longer life. Use census figures to understand changes in population trends. Evaluate new or recent practices that are helping individuals remain active and healthy throughout life. Analyze factors that contribute to overall health, such as heredity, personal habits, health resources, cultural acceptance, and economics.
One's life-style as one gets older is related to individual preference and the time in which one is born.	Interview older adults to compare changes in appearance, occupations, and hobbies today in relation to 20, 30, or 40 years ago. Note the different life-styles at various times in history. List today's acceptable styles in appearance, occupations, and hobbies for various age groups.	Compare the occupational demands of rural and urban living as to need for rest, relaxation, recreation, and sleep. Analyze how individual needs and values interact with the social environment to determine one's life-style as one gets older.

Chronological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Understand that retirement years may comprise one-fourth of a person's lifetime.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
As the human life span increases, people live longer after retirement.	List reasons for people living longer: machinery has made life safer and easier at home and at work; food is enriched and is more readily available; medical care has been improved.	Understand that technology has increased the average life span, thereby creating more leisure time.
	Understand that, as the population ages, a greater number of older people are returning to school.	Discuss the satisfying use of leisure time.
	List the activities you enjoy most now. Will they be the same at ages twenty, forty, and sixty?	Compare relationships between life span and development of technology in the United States and in other countries.
	Compare the recreational activities of parents and grandparents. Discuss reasons for similarities and differences.	Discuss implications of public and private pension plans.
		Discuss reasons for retirement.

Physiological/Biological Aging

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding of physical changes that occur with age and recognize that some of these changes may affect relationships and mobility and may require changes in the capacity to cope.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Major systemic changes develop as an individual ages.	Identify obvious physical changes that occur with age, such as changes in the teeth and hair, sexual development, body shape and size, brain development, strength, and stamina. Recognize physical changes in old age. Recognize that ability to think remains throughout life and may increase in efficiency in old age.	Discuss major systems of the body, such as skeletal, renal, cardiovascular, nervous, pulmonary.
Aging is normal and is not the result of disease, although a person's vulnerability to disease increases with time.	Recognize that the aging process is normal and that one can experience old age without being ill. List diseases common at various ages.	List scientific contributions that protect people from diseases and disorders. Identify activities that older people continue efficiently throughout life. Recognize that, by living longer, one increases exposure to illness and disease. List ways in which society provides services for the aged to help prevent institutionalization. Understand that the large majority of elderly people live outside of institutions, alone or with family members.
Losses due to physical aging may affect the mobility and personal independence of the elderly.	Recognize that people of all ages experience physical losses. List ways in which aging can affect mobility and personal independence and behavior. List ways in which people adjust to changes in mobility and physical losses. Participate in activities simulating sensory losses or changes in mobility. Identify the range of motion needed to perform daily activities.	Relate physical losses to advancing age. Participate in activities simulating various losses. Discuss small interventions that enhance independent living for people in various age groups.

Physiological/Biological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that people age differently; that some bodily changes are evident in outward physical appearances; that some changes do not show; and that the range and types of changes vary among individuals.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Physical aging among individuals is variable.	Understand that each person ages in an individual manner and at an individual rate.	Identify both common and diverse "physical aging signs" among individuals. Identify major physical changes within each stage of life.
External physical signs of aging result in changes in appearance. However, although changes do occur, most individuals maintain their capacity for independent, satisfying life-styles.	Develop an understanding that, as we age, physical changes result in changes in appearance. Understand that people, plants, and animals are born, live, and die. Be able to describe differences in appearance at various stages. Describe personal changes by means of a comparison of personal photographs.	List physical aging signs and identify those considered most universal. Analyze the physical characteristics of aged people as depicted by the media: films, television and radio, books, magazines, newspapers, and advertising. Understand that birth and death are part of the human life cycle.
Genetics and environment affect the aging process.	Understand that life spans differ among species. Become aware that living organisms have offspring and that particular environments are vital to the survival of these organisms. Recognize the differences and similarities among organisms and their offspring as they age.	Analyze the interrelationship of factors influencing life span among living organisms: *environmental* factors such as nutrition, pollution, stress, mental and physical activity; *genetic* factors such as the life span of one's parents and other family members; affective state and influence on health. Discuss genetic, environmental, ethnic, and cultural differences that can affect one's life span and the quality of one's life. Discuss life-styles at various times and places in history that demonstrate changes in expected longevity. Compare current life-styles with those of earlier periods of American life, noting the effects of industrialization. Compare American life-styles with those of long-lived people in other countries.

Physiological/Biological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop awareness, knowledge, and understanding that people may experience sensory losses as they age.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Older people do retain their capacity for adequate response to age-related stress.	Become aware that sensory deprivation can occur at any age.	Cite examples of stress-inducing factors in society which may change during the life cycle.
	Begin to relate such changes as they affect personal habits and activities.	Identify symptoms indicating that sensory change has occurred.
	Identify ways to adjust to sensory changes.	Describe programs of treatment and control to aid people in adjusting to sensory losses.
	Recognize that sensory changes are not universal in degree or kind.	

Physiological/Biological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Begin the practice of sound health habits that may influence the aging process throughout one's life.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Health maintenance is possible from infancy through old age.	Identify practices that support good health throughout one's life.	Discuss the need for adequate and proper nutrition as it affects growth, strength, and resistance to disease.
		Become able to make responsible choices for health practices that lead to optimal health throughout life.
	Understand the importance of a regular routine of physical activity, rest, mental stimulation, and proper nutrition as necessary for good health.	Plan and participate in health practices designed to meet individual needs.
		Discuss interventions of such items as eyeglasses, canes, and special shoes to enhance physical well-being.
		Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of mental, physical, and emotional health practices to successful aging.
		Exercise responsibility in decisions affecting proper nutrition and health.
	Examine health maintenance in other countries: England, the Soviet Union, China, Canada, and Mexico.	Discuss the role of American medical practice and education in relation to health maintenance.

Sociocultural Aspects of Aging

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that how one ages is influenced by one's own feelings about aging, others' feelings as they age, and the attitudes of society at large.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Society helps to form one's attitudes toward age and behavior.	List behaviors appropriate to different ages.	Understand how the media influence attitudes toward the elderly. Discuss other factors that influence society.
	Review the media and discuss similarities and differences in how the elderly and young are portrayed. Identify positive and negative attitudes toward aging.	Determine the actual qualities of the elderly apart from stereotypes.
	Survey older adults as to how they feel about growing older. Compare their reactions to those of others, such as family, friends, and teachers.	Discuss how a person's values, economic status, and cultural experiences influence attitudes.
		Realize that attitudes change as actual research provides more knowledge about aging.
		Investigate legislation affecting the elderly as to income, health, housing, transportation, and the right to die.
Society determines the options available to its elderly.	Talk about feelings related to one's own aging, considering services society offers.	Demonstrate an understanding that a responsible society organizes to provide services through public, private, or voluntary institutions.
		Explore costs involved in providing services.
	Discuss the local community where older people live—why they live there and what services institutions offer them.	Explore ways in which services differ according to where a person lives and what the person's ethnic background is.
	Discuss ways in which personal resources such as money, transportation, and health enable the elderly to make use of services.	Assess the youth-oriented culture characteristic of the United States.
		Examine expected changes in attitude, services, and family patterns as the percentage of elderly people continues to increase.

Sociocultural Aspects of Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding of the factors that play an important role in how a person ages: life-styles; relationships with family, friends, and the community; the quality of life; one's dwelling; and one's cultural heritage.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
The role and treatment of older people differ within various cultural and ethnic groups.	Discuss different cultural groups represented in the class and identify family members included in the various patterns. List cultural contributions by people of various age groups. Identify needs common to all cultural groups.	Explain why it is often difficult for individuals and groups to appreciate the diverse life-styles of others. Examine ways in which the elderly are treated in various cultures. Describe ways in which youth may resolve conflicts arising from cultural misunderstandings. Examine the relationship of cutural diffusion to pride in one's own heritage.
Social factors affect the elderly and may determine how and where they live.	Identify where the elderly live in the community. List possible reasons for choice of residence.	Assess the need of the elderly for security, safety, friends their own age, and access to services. Discuss problems presented in urban versus rural living.

Sociocultural Aspects of Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that role changes occur and that an analysis of one's own strengths, weaknesses, and possible alternatives helps one to prepare for optimal aging. Develop an appreciation of older people as resources of knowledge, experience, skills, and abilities.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Society provides roles for people of all ages.	Talk about various roles each person assumes during life.	Examine the importance of the role of work among age groups within different cultures.
		Discuss how the loss of a work role can affect people.
	List roles that the family provides for all members and changes that occur as the family grows. Discuss roles one can assume in helping the elderly.	Realize that roles are subject to changes in age and in the expectations of society.
	Discuss cultural differences in role expectations.	Discuss how various roles affect self-identity.
Planning for anticipated changes in roles is helpful.	Tell ways in which one can plan ahead for a role change.	Define retirement and discuss the importance of planning for retirement.
	Talk about what being male or female means.	Assess the importance of anticipating retirement in relation to analyzing one's own strengths and weaknesses.
	Know that, in general, women live longer than men and more older women than men are single.	Recognize that alternative life plans must include adequate provision for financial security, housing, health care, and activities to replace the work week or family rearing.
	Become aware that most people discontinue employment at about age sixty-five.	Understand the roles of male and female as they age and possibly experience the loss of spouse, friends, job, health.

Sociocultural Aspects of Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Understand the effects of years and historical events on an aging person.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Longevity is related in part to the decade in which an individual is born. Students are today more likely to live longer than they would have in previous generations.	Identify the number of years during which generations of family members have lived.	Discuss factors in one's surroundings that may influence longevity.
	Compare what family composition is today and what it might be 20 or 30 years from now.	Compare the advantages and consequences of being born before 1900, between 1900 and 1950, and today.
	Compare health-related attitudes and behaviors at different times in history.	Discuss diseases that have influenced longevity.
	Understand that a person can die at any age.	Analyze the relationship between mortality and aging.
	Tell why people in other countries may live longer than U.S. citizens do.	Understand that many different factors affect longevity, one factor being ancestry.
		Determine ways in which the community can develop specific programs to enhance the quality of added years.

Psychological Aging

Content Area Goal: Develop attitudes and behaviors that lead to an increased awareness of learning as a lifelong opportunity suitable for everyone.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
People can learn and change throughout their lives.	Compare pictures of older people and discuss what they may be like.	Discuss ways in which people can change their life course and be responsible for their own happiness.
	Talk about older people whom students know, listing physical and emotional changes and the effect of the changes on behavior.	Point out differences in older people. Identify why some were more satisfied with their lives than were others.
	Talk about people of all ages who are going to school, use a library, or teach. Cite reasons why people of all ages go to school.	Examine different levels of continuing education and determine what can be offered to older adults through education.
		Examine research that verifies ability to continue learning throughout life. Discuss the values of continued learning.

Psychological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an awareness that attitudes, values, goals, and relationships may change as people age.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Family members are dependent on one another in a variety of ways throughout life.	List changes that occur in the ways family members cooperate with each other in work and play as the members age.	Analyze areas of adjustment needed as families move and grow older.
	Discuss ways in which each family member contributes to the family as a whole.	Understand how the demands of living in a complex society affect the family.
	Demonstrate friendly, supportive, and respectful attitudes toward family members.	Discuss how changes in family structure, from the extended family to the nuclear family, have created different roles for older family members.
People of all ages need love, understanding and a sense of worth (purpose). Early experiences help shape one's sense of self-worth, of human dignity.	List ways in which family and friends satisfy one's need for love and understanding.	Develop skills in active listening when communicating with older people and understand that, through the use of good communication skills, a mutual sense of worth can be established.
	Tell about pleasant experiences with older family members and friends.	List several ways to promote understanding between generations.
	Discuss and describe one's feelings when one is left out of family group activities.	Analyze options people use to meet present and future needs.
	Tell about how people of various ages have been influenced by being shown care and understanding.	Discuss the importance of family interaction in establishing a mutual sense of worth. Analyze how supports change as each member becomes independent.
	List different ways in which love is expressed.	Identify factors leading to emotional well-being.
		Examine the effects of heritage, environment, and experience one's self-image.
Life-styles differ among and within families, changing as individuals age.	Describe how families live in the local community. Compare this life-style with that of families in other communities.	List ways in which work, life-style, activity, and retirement differ among and within families.
	Relate how each generation in the family lives and describe differences.	Discuss how age and family composition affect life-style.

Psychological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an awareness that attitudes, values, goals, and relationships may change as people age.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
One can develop a sincere appreciation for people at every age level.		Recognize the irreversible changes that occur physically as one ages and list positive aspects of each change.
	Understand that what is appropriate for people of a certain age may not be appropriate for people of a different age but that all have good reasons for their behavior.	Consider the total older person and that person's contribution to society.
	Discover attributes of older people that can be appreciated.	Learn to appreciate a person's past contributions to society as part of the total person before judging the person.
	Recognize that, as people age, impressions and acceptance of people change.	Understand that people want to be valued for their total lifetime contributions even though they may be unable to work now.

Psychological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Learn to make considered decisions about the use and misuse of time and the effect of time on personal perceptions and life situations.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
One can plan for an active old age and retirement by the creative use of time throughout all of one's life.	Discuss and demonstrate hobbies and interests.	Identify various careers, interests, and activities of older people.
	Understand that limits imposed on the aged by society today in relation to work, life-style, and retirement are not irreversible.	Formulate plans for maintaining independence in one's later years in relation to work, life-style, activity, and retirement.
	List various opportunities to use time constructively.	Examine why some people are capable of marked physical achievements; for example, long-distance walkers, skiers, bicyclists, swimmers, and so on. Examine reasons for marked achievement in mental skills.
	Locate older people in the community who are active and seem to be enjoying themselves.	Discuss the importance of the creative use of time and its continuing effect in later years.

Psychological Aging (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that successful living involves learning to cope effectively with temporary failure, depression, or permanent loss.

Concept	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
People of all ages experience loneliness.	Recognize the importance of being sensitive to people and the need to include older adults in activities.	Tell why people experience loneliness.
		Determine appropriate ways in which to alleviate the loneliness experienced by the elderly.
	Identify attitudes and behaviors that help to make friends.	Interpret the relationship of psychological factors and physical isolation to loneliness. Understand that loneliness may be more a psychological than a physical experience.
Death and loss happen at all ages. Death is most common in one's late years.	Understand that all organisms are born, live, and die.	Analyze why people may respond differently to death.
	Talk about loss and the sadness we experience as a result of change of schools, diminished status among peers, and sensory loss.	Examine how coping now prepares one for the losses of age.
	Begin to understand that reasons for the onset of death may differ with age.	
	Understand that losses become more prevalent as one ages; for example, diminished eyesight, hearing, mobility, taste, and touch.	Demonstrate positive ways of coping with loss to maintain emotional stability and psychological well-being.

The Community and the Older Individual

Content Area Goal: Develop attitudes and behaviors that lead to responsible choices and planning for enhancing the lives of people of all ages.

Concept	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Changes in the stages of life affect individual interactions with community institutions.	Become aware of oneself as a unique individual functioning as a member of home, school, and community groups.	Examine the types of role changes associated with different stages of life.
	Recognize that the behavior expected of an individual and the roles assumed are subject to economic and social changes as one ages.	Explain the value and benefit of recognizing differences in abilities, interests, and attitudes among people in the same stage of life and in different stages.
	Examine the variety of jobs required so that the needs of society can be met.	Conduct a survey of the occupational roles of parents and older citizens to determine factors that have influenced occupational choices and have limited success.

The Community and the Older Individual (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Learn that an individual can bring about institutional change by participating in local, state, and federal organizations and agencies.

Concept	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Many individuals have brought about and can bring about institutional change through social and political participation.	List the names of some political leaders in the world. Realize that leaders are of different ages.	Describe how the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the United States have been extended to increasing numbers of people.
	Discuss older people who have been active in politics and involved with social and economic issues in the community. Cite efforts that have been made toward institutional changes.	Analyze formal and informal political processes by which individuals and cultural groups have effected institutional change.
	List organizations young people can join, such as Scouts and Junior Audubon. Identify the purpose of organizations and what their members can contribute.	Identify the origin, membership, and political purposes of selected senior citizens' organizations at the local and national levels.
		Interview an older adult and discuss similarities and differences in attitudes and methods of participation in a selected social issue.
		Discuss the importance of political participation. Examine one's own values as to personal involvement.
The individual and the many institutions of our society interact dynamically.	Discuss how people have met basic personal needs during different periods of history. Examine interactions with community organizations.	Demonstrate positive ways in which institutional changes and events in one agency have often led to changes in other institutions and to the way in which individuals interact with institutions.
	Talk about one's own method of interaction on the basis of age, experience, and cultural perspectives.	Recognize how age, income level, and cultural background influence individual methods of interaction with institutions.
	Talk about satisfactions derived from services given and about disappointments felt when services are denied.	Analyze how society changes its views of norms established for institutional services.

The Community and the Older Individual (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that some organizations supporting the elderly must be financed by tax revenues as well as by private funds.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Our communities commonly provide services through formal organizations (public, private, or voluntary), each of which requires a funding source.	Describe local community organizations or agencies and identify why they need money.	Identify local and national organizations, both public and private, associated with providing services to older adults. List the types of services offered.
	Identify services offered by each type of organization described.	Examine the resources and services available for older adults in the local community. Identify any gaps discovered in services.
	Talk about services students or their families have used and their reaction to their first visit to the organization.	Examine variations in services offered to local residents in other areas of the United States or in other countries. Develop conclusions to explain the variations.
	Discuss how an older person might feel in contacting the same kind of organization.	Describe value conflicts between what society provides and what further services may be needed from its institutions.
	Discuss services provided for the elderly in other countries and tell how the services differ from those available in the United States.	Identify ways in which society's values are reflected in the present and past services that society provides through its institutions.

The Community and the Older Individual (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an understanding that individuals respond differently to assistance offered by organizations.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
Persons exhibit individual differences in need for assistance from organizations and agencies.	Identify types of protection needed by people living alone in comparison to people living in groups; by the young in comparison to the old.	Demonstrate an awareness that individuals differ in need for services. Discriminate between situations that the individual can resolve alone and those that require assistance.
	Report on services provided by various institutions (housing, transportation, health care, safety, education, and legal services) for older adults in the community.	Discuss the need for various services at different age levels. Be sure to include housing, transportation, health care, safety, and legal services.
	Name various sources in the community where information about services is available.	Understand the problems that older handicapped adults face and the types of institutional assistance needed.
	Compare services provided for old people with those provided for young people.	Examine similarities and differences in the types of protection needed by people living alone in comparison to people living in a group; by the young in comparison to the old. Cite examples that can affect the risk invoived.
	Identify some of the similarities and differences in attitudes that people have toward institutions and services.	Develop priorities for issues of importance now. Compare the priorities to those the students may have at forty years of age and sixty-five years of age. Identify institutions appropriate for each stage of life.
	List agencies with which students come into contact. Discuss changes in services needed as the students age.	Compare the advantages and consequences of possessing various attitudes toward the use of institutions and services.
	Become aware of the reasons for older people living where they do in the community.	Consider the percentage of elderly people living in the inner city in comparison to people in other age groups and discuss the meaning of your findings.
	List ways in which the community is structured to make getting from one place to another as easy as possible. List aids for older people with handicaps, such as nonglaring signs, slanted curbs, building ramps, and special parking spaces.	Interpret the relationship between planning services to ensure accessibility and enjoying satisfactory retirement living.

The Community and the Older Individual (Cont.)

Content Area Goal: Develop an awareness that the limits society places on the elderly as to work, life-style, activity, and retirement can be changed by society.

Concepts	Suggested objectives	
	Elementary	Secondary
It is the responsibility of society to improve and expand methods of meeting the needs of older people.	Discuss what grandparents need to make their lives fuller and happier.	List services that are inadequate in meeting the needs of older people. Suggest new legislation to rectify these lacks. Suggest new programs to meet the needs.
	Understand that people who are retired now were once workers or homemakers.	Discuss the type of wording needed to legislate the end of mandated retirement. Include alternatives to existing law.
People who are old today have earned benefits by contibuting to society, paying taxes, raising children, and serving the community.	Understand how students make contributions by participating in classroom activities. Discuss the differences in lasting value.	Discuss past contributions that are still useful, such as inventions, medical discoveries, and the establishment of organizations.
	Demonstrate the use of a tool known to man in the past that is used today and will probably be used in the future.	Research the process of obtaining a product or service in both past and present and the way in which the process might be handled in the future.

Relationship of Content Area Goals to Concepts of Aging

Teachers might find the following format useful in developing questions on the concepts of aging that will test the student's understanding, growth in behavior, and change in attitude:

Realm: Chronological Aging

Will I ever be old?

Self-awareness: *I know.*
I grow older every day.

Decision making: *I choose.*
I can plan for my own future.

Coping: *I behave.*
I treat older people as I will want to be treated when I am old.

Realm: Physiological/Biological Aging

What changes do I prepare for as I grow older?

Self-awareness: *I know.*
The life cycle reaches from birth through old age.

Decision making: *I choose.*
I will meet each stage of life with confidence.

Coping: *I behave.*
I will pay attention to good nutrition and to exercise for the development of a healthy body.

Realm: Sociocultural Aspects of Aging

What are older people like?

Self-awareness: *I know.*
They are not all as we see them in popular magazines, films, and advertisements.

Decision making: *I choose.*
Myths about aging must be corrected to represent older people honestly.

Coping: *I behave.*
I recognize that each person is an individual with equal rights, and I will respect age and cultural differences.

Realm: Psychological Aging

What makes for a satisfying old age?

Self-awareness: *I know.*
Warm relationships with family and friends are important to older people.

Decision making: *I choose.*
I can begin now to choose interests and activities that will be lifelong.

Coping: *I behave.*
I will try to make friends with people of all ages and with different interests and backgrounds.

Realm: The Community and the Older Individual

How does my community interact with older people?

Self-awareness: *I know.*
It has many services, including health services, special housing, adult education, recreation, and transportation.

Decision making: *I choose.*
I can help older people in the community, and they can help me.

Coping: *I behave.*
I will try to take part in activities that help strengthen the community.

Evaluation of Instruction on Aging

Successful instruction on aging should result in a student's growth in knowledge, with some corresponding changes in attitude and behavior. Evidence of such growth can be evaluated by noting changes in:[7]

A. A knowledge of the aged in America, including:
   1. Demographic data
   2. Diversity of the aged population
   3. Sociological factors: economics, health, housing, transportation, family relations, recreation, and education
   4. Retirement and its implications
   5. Independent living in the community as opposed to institutionalization
   6. Comparison with other times and cultures
   7. Physical and psychological needs of the aged

B. Familiarity with community resources and services for the aged

C. Understanding aging as a life-span process, including:
   1. General life stages through which we age
   2. Biological changes of old age
   3. Psychological changes of old age
   4. Common problems of old age
   5. Mutual relationship of the community and aged residents

D. Attitude toward age and aged as evidenced by:
   1. Growth in vocabulary
   2. Readiness to communicate with persons of all ages
   3. Recognition and acceptance of the challenges in growing older:
      a. Planning for retirement
      b. Realization of new options
      c. Lifelong education
      d. Use of leisure time
      e. Health maintenance
      f. Acceptance of death as the final stage of life

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[7] Adapted from John Myers, "Objectives of a K–12 Aging Curriculum for the Public Schools" (master's thesis, University of Akron, n.d.).

E. Ability to distinguish between myths and realities

Different evaluation techniques are appropriate for children of different ages, and the specific techniques to be used vary according to the standards and measurements chosen by the evaluator. The section on evaulation in *California Curriculum Frameworks: A Handbook for Production, Implementation, and Evaluation Activities* (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1977) will be found useful in planning evaluation.

Continual evaluation of classroom activities will aid teachers in deciding whether to use an activity again. What may be appropriate in one classroom may not be suitable in another. It is hoped that evaluation will also lead to the discovery of ways to help students and teachers refine concepts of stronger, more direct learning.

Resources for Instruction on Aging

Large numbers of institutions of higher education have accepted gerontology as a legitimate area of academic study, teaching, and practice. Much of the basic information provided by recent research is validated evidence that exposes the fallacy of widely held myths on aging and contradicts the negative presentations of the aged by the popular media. Beyond the primary facts of population structure and longevity, the accumulation of knowledge about older persons has accelerated in the past ten to 15 years. This knowledge is found in a variety of forms—textbooks, monographs, journals, films, slides, tapes, and conference proceedings—and at many levels of sophistication.

The list of selected references contained in this publication will be found valuable as a guide to recent developments. Many of the books listed contain information on resources for instruction on aging. Other resources include personnel in a position to offer assistance and materials that can be used for instruction.

Resource Persons

Supervisors of curriculum development in school districts and offices of county superintendents of schools may offer assistance in selecting and obtaining materials for instruction on aging.

Consultants in the State Department of Aging, the State Department of Education, and the State Department of Health can offer guidance.

Faculty members from nearby colleges and universities may contribute ideas for curriculum guides, materials, and teaching methods.

Community agencies, both public and private, may offer services. Examples include senior service centers, youth organizations, religious groups, fraternal organizations, local offices of the Social Security Administration, the retired senior volunteer program (RSVP), area agencies on aging, and associations providing community mental health services and family services.

Retirement communities, retirement homes, and convalescent hospitals have resource persons who may be contacted for information.

Students and the families of students themselves should not be overlooked in the search for persons who can serve as resources on aging.

Resource Materials

School districts and offices of county superintendents of schools have compilations of curriculum resource materials on aging.

Audiovisual departments in the offices of county superintendents of schools and in school districts as well as the county library systems make up and distribute lists of available films, filmstrips, photographs, and records. Special attention can be given to building collections of media items on aging.

Federal, state, and local governments have publications and film catalogues related to education on aging. But because these materials are not centrally located, teachers may find it expedient to use local sources of information.

All states have departments or offices responsible for administering programs on health, and many have offices dealing specifically with the aged. The offices compile information that may be used as resource materials.

The Federal Administration on Aging has offices in many regions throughout the United States. A federal or state department of aging can supply the address of the nearest regional office to contact for resource materials.

Community agencies can often provide films, speakers, posters, and information about aged people in the community.

Bibliography and Resource List

A bibliography and resource list is available for use with this handbook. (See *Education About Aging*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education, [1977].) It includes titles of books and films on the concepts of aging appropriate to elementary and secondary school students.

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Glossary of Terms

Included in this glossary are words unique to gerontology. Common terms from the social sciences are not included, nor are terms which are adequately defined in general dictionaries.[1]

Age changes. Changes in an individual as a result of the aging processes. (See also *aging; age differences.*)

Age, chronological. Age measured by the number of years lived from the date of birth.

Age differences. Differences among categories of people of different chronological age at a particular time. The differences are only partially the result of the aging process. (See also *age changes.*)

Age grading. A social process by which eligibility and responsibility for various positions in the group are determined primarily by chronological age.

Age identification. The individual's stage of life as he (she) perceives it. The age the individual thinks he (she) is.

Age strata. Categories used to classify persons in a given age interval. Used to compare age differences within a given population at a particular time.

Age, symptomatic. Age measured by symptoms of biological, psychological, and social aging. Wrinkled skin, difficulty in remembering things, and involuntary retirement are examples of symptomatic indicators of age.

Aging. A general term used for various biological, psychological, and social processes by which an individual acquires the socially defined characteristics of old age. (See also *senescence; old age.*)

Cohorts. All individuals of approximately the same age; for example, all persons born in the year 1900.

Dependency. A social state in which the individual must rely on others for financial or physical support.

Disengagement, psychological. The process by which an individual withdraws commitments to various social roles. May be manifested by dropping various roles or by "going through the motions."

Disengagement, societal. The process by which society withdraws support from the individual and ceases to seek a commitment from him (her). May be active, such as compulsory retirement; or passive, as lack of encouragement of an older individual to stay on.

Engagement. A commitment by an individual to a particular social role. Commitment can be to one role or to several, it may be deep or superficial; and it may be real or symbolic.

Geriatric. Referring to the medical treatment of old age and its diseases.

Gerontology. The study of aging processes. A field of investigation comprised of the results from various traditional disciplines and professions directed toward understanding the processes of aging and their consequences. From the Greek *geron,* "old man."

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[1]Reprinted, with changes, from *The Aging Processes: An Instructional Handbook for Teaching,* prepared by the School of Social Work, University of Southern Mississippi (Jackson: Mississippi Council on Aging, 1976), by permission of the publisher.

Golden age club. A voluntary organization for older people that lacks its own facility and offers a limited program (usually recreational) to its members. (See also *senior center.*)

Health maintenance. Describes the goals and services related to disease prevention and the promotion and maintenance of maximum independence of function. Health maintenance uses such techniques and programs as periodic health examinations, multiphasic screening, immunizations, mental health education, accident prevention, and general health education.

Institution. A housing facility organized primarily to provide services such as personal care, housekeeping, mental health care, or medical care for its residents.

Later maturity. A life-cycle stage socially defined or typified by a marked decline in energy; awareness of sensory loss; onset of chronic health problems; difficulty in remaining future-oriented; recognition that one's time is growing short; loss of social contacts through retirement, widowhood, and movement of children; and freedom from responsibilities such as work or child rearing.

Life cycle. The life of an individual seen as a series of stages, such as infancy, childhood, adulthood, middle age, later maturity, and old age.

Life expectancy. The average period of time during which a group of individuals of the same age will live, given current mortality rates. Life expectancy can be computed from any age but is most often computed from birth.

Life review. The process by which an individual reviews the past events of his (her) life in an effort to identify, evaluate, and give meaning to the forces that have shaped his (her) life.

Life space. The field or network of social interactions unique to an individual.

Life span. The theoretical maximum length of life, estimated to be about 120 years for human beings. (See also *life expectancy; longevity.*)

Longevity. The actual length of life of a particular organism. (See also *life expectancy; life span.*)

Middle age. A stage of the life cycle socially defined or typified by obvious energy decline; shifting from physical to mental activities; feeling of having reached a goal or plateau in one's career; awareness that life is finite; shrinking of family as children leave home; entry of women into the labor force; employment troubles; and feelings of restlessness, not getting anywhere. (See also *later maturity; old age.*)

Nursing home. A group housing facility which offers health care plus personal care. (See also *personal care home.*)

Old age. A stage of the life cycle socially defined or typified by increasing frailty and disability; much introspection and concern over the meaning of life; distinct awareness of approaching death; financial and physical dependency; isolation, boredom, and loneliness. (See also *middle age; later maturity.*)

Older person. Conceptually, an individual in the later maturity or old age stages of the life cycle. Socially, people are usually classified as older if they are chronologically sixty-five years of age or older. Legally, several chronological ages are used to define people as old, beginning as early as forty-five. (See also *later maturity; old age.*)

Pension. A periodic payment to a person or his (her) family, given as a result of previous on-the-job service.

Personal care home. A group housing facility offering personal care, help in getting about, cooking and household services but not nursing services. Sometimes called a boarding or domiciliary home. (See also *nursing home.*)

Retirement. The period following a career of jobholding in which job responsibilities and opportunities are minimized and in which economic wherewithal comes by virtue of having held a job for a minimum length of time in the past.

Retirement cohort. A group of co-workers who retire at the same time from a place of employment or in the same neighborhood or community.

Retirement processes. The processes by which the individual prepares for, accomplishes, adjusts to, and lives out retirement. (See also *retirement.*)

Senescence. A state of growing old; physical aging.

Senility. A traditional and often erroneous term for degenerative change in old people, including illness and weakness, especially mental. Often used without adequate diagnosis and as a derogatory term.

Senior center. A voluntary organization for older people offering its members a range of services (recreation, nutrition, education, transportation, referral, and so on) and having a specific facility for this purpose.

Social gerontology. A subfield of gerontology dealing with the developmental and group behavior of adults and with the causes and consequences of having older people in the population.

Social welfare. Actions in response to a broad range of basic human needs, such as health, economic, leisure time, and environmental needs. An individual, a group, or a community may be the recipients of social welfare services.